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## Choose Vegan

## INSTITUTIONALIZING CRUELTY

In the United States alone, nearly 10 billion animals (excluding aquatic animals) are slaughtered for human consumption every year—more than 1 million animals every hour. Most are kept on "factory farms," where the goal is to raise the greatest number of animals in the least amount of time and space possible. As the agribusiness industry is almost entirely exempt from basic U.S. animal cruelty laws, they are legally allowed to callously exploit animals.

Instead of being treated as the living, feeling beings they are, farmed animals are viewed as mere commodities whose sole purpose in life is to produce flesh, milk, or eggs for humans.



Egg-laying hens are intensely confined in rows upon rows of tiny cages.

While many countries have banned the battery cage system because of its inherent cruelty, U.S. egg producers still cram four to five hens in a 12- by 18-inch wire cage. The cages are stacked one on top of another, forcing the chickens in lower rows to live in the excrement of those above them. When egg production begins to decline among "layers," the "spent" hens go directly to slaughter, destined to become lesser grade meat. Chickens raised for their flesh and modern pigs in factory farms have been bred to grow so fast that their bones are unable to support their unnaturally enormous body weight, leaving them to suffer from chronic bone problems and often unable to walk or even stand comfortably. The intense confinement of pigs in factory farms leads to fighting and tail-biting. The industry's answer to this is not more humane living conditions, but rather cutting off the tails of baby pigs and castrating them (to make them less aggressive), both without the use of anesthesia. As with any mammal, cows produce milk when pregnant and stop after their calves have been weaned. To ensure the highest milk yield possible, modern dairy farmers artificially inseminate the cows and keep them pumped full of steroids and hormones. If the calf is female, she will join her mother on the dairy line. If the calf is male, he will be sold to a veal farm within the first one to three days of his life. Veal calves spend their entire lives chained inside a crate too small for them to even turn around. Having never felt the grass beneath their feet, veal calves are sent to slaughter after 16 weeks of intense confinement.



## RAVAGING THE EARTH

Raising animals for food is one of the leading

*"The animals of this*



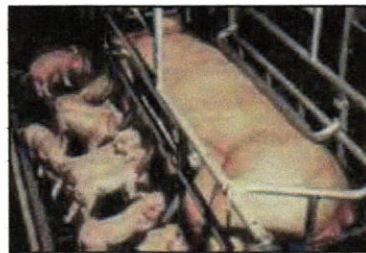
Millions of acres of forests have been clear-cut to provide grazing land.

causes of  
environmental  
degradation and  
resource  
depletion

throughout the world today. The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations reports that animal agriculture significantly contributes to, or causes, environmental problems such as: watershed contamination, acid rain, decreased biodiversity (through habitat loss), soil erosion, greenhouse gas production, and aquifer depletion. Factory farms are also incredibly inefficient at converting energy into food for humans. For example, recent studies have shown that it takes roughly 12,000 gallons of water to produce one pound of beef, which is 200 times more water than needed to produce one pound of potatoes.

*world exist for their  
own reasons. They  
were not created for  
humans any more than  
blacks were created  
for whites, or women  
for men."*

—Alice Walker



Breeding sows are confined in metal stalls so narrow they cannot turn around.

### DESTROYING OUR HEALTH

Countless studies have proven that heart disease—the number one killer in the United States—is caused by a diet high in animal fat and cholesterol. The American Dietetic Association, a leading authority on dietary matters, states that vegetarian diets are associated with a reduced risk for obesity, hypertension, diabetes mellitus, colorectal

cancer, lung cancer, and kidney disease.

### CONCLUSION

As ethical individuals, we must decide whether the unconscionable suffering inflicted upon beings who experience many of the same emotions as humans (most importantly, the ability to suffer), is justified by palate preference. As it is unnecessary to eat animal flesh (and most studies even suggest that it is healthier to abstain from it), how can we possibly continue to torture and kill billions of animals for food each year? The conditions in which most animals raised for human consumption are forced to live are blatantly cruel and unjust. Yet, these conditions are only a symptom of a much larger fundamental injustice: Animals raised to be eaten are treated as if they were mere commodities, as means to human ends when in fact, they are sentient individuals, who like us, are owed respectful treatment. We can survive without eating other animals. As we know that our lifestyle unnecessarily causes enormous suffering unto others, it is time to reevaluate our actions.



Cows are strung up and their throats are slit.

***When you decide what to eat, please choose compassion over killing.***





A dairy cow with mastitis, a common udder infection.



Calves raised for veal spend their short lives in tiny crates.

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